

**Testimony for the Appropriations Committee  
Funding for the Connecticut Mental Health Center  
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Senator Formica, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and Members of the Committee, I am writing on behalf of funding for the Connecticut Mental Health Center.

**I am writing testimony for the Appropriations Committee IN SUPPORT OF FUNDING for the Connecticut Mental Health Center.**

Few outside of mental health might be aware, but for the last half century the Connecticut Mental Health Center has been a nexus of innovation for public sector mental health. I have worked at the CMHC for the last 8 months, but even before that I was aware of the CMHC's reputation – in fact, I moved my family from Arkansas to New Haven specifically so that I could do fellowship training there. The importance that the CMHC played in the history of community-based psychiatric care is known nation-wide, and it continues to have a national reputation for superlative care and as a source of innovation and leadership in the field. Programs developed, initiated, and underway here are redefining the standard of care for public sector mental health.

Several of the most successful, for instance the STEP program for early psychosis in which I work, have as a goal early intervention to both reduce illness burden on patients, and also the economic burden of delayed treatment of chronic disease. This is just one example of how moneys invested in CMHC yield much higher returns down the road. For another instance, it is estimated that for every one dollar invested by the state in CMHC, \$8.23 come back in additional grant support. An economic advantage more difficult to calculate, but likely equally impressive, is the impact on workforce recruitment. Every year thousands of psychiatrists apply for spots in residencies and fellowships with partial funding and affiliation with CMHC. Once here they are much more likely to stay on in New Haven and Connecticut, expanding mental health availability to Connecticut's citizens, and tax base to her coffers.

Another clinical program with which I work, the Assertive Community Treatment team, is a high-intensity treatment team of physicians, nurses, and social workers that cares for patients whose chronic and severe mental illness precludes them from more conventional modes of care. These are patients that in previous generations would have either been in state hospitals their whole lives – or dead. Instead, they are able to live independent lives out in the community with the support of the ACT team, with dramatically fewer visits to emergency departments or acute inpatient stays. This has economic benefit as the cost of a single day of avoided inpatient stay pays for weeks of their ACT team care. But, even more importantly, the ACT team is one example of how CMHC takes care of the most ill and most vulnerable – often times those who do not fit into conventional modes of care and would likely not be served well or at all by other mental health options.

My aim in this brief written statement was to impress upon you the importance of CMHC as a gem in the intellectual crown of public sector psychiatry, as a magnet for recruiting the best and brightest to New Haven and Connecticut, as a smart and proven economic investment, and most importantly, as a unique source of care for our most ill and most vulnerable citizens. I hope that one or all of these points might sway you in support of funding the Connecticut Mental Health Center.